

REMARKS

The Office Action dated December 14, 2006 has been carefully considered. Claims 2-5, 7, 10 and 13 have been amended. Claims 1, 9, 12 and 14 have been canceled. New claims 15 and 16 have been added. Claims 2-8, 10, 11, 13, 15 and 16 are in this application. No new matter has been entered.

The drawings were objected to as not showing every feature of the claims. The Examiner indicated that the U-shaped circumferentially extending engaging portions must be shown or the features canceled from the claims. Claim 6 has been amended to cancel this limitation to obviate the Examiner's rejection.

The previously presented claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as indefinite. Applicants submit that the newly presented claims obviate the Examiner's rejections and meet the guidelines of 35 U.S.C. § 112.

The previously presented claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0029444 to Lyle.

Lyle discloses a snap fastener comprising: first and second fastening members (10,11). The first fastening member (11) comprises a base (14) that has a floor (16) from which a peripheral side wall (18) extends. However, cylindrical wall (18) does not comprise resilient projections (21). Rather, resilient projections (21) project from flange (16) and are separate/distinct from side wall (18). Thus, at Paragraph 7, lines 3-5 Lyle states: "*Each fastening member has a base with a plurality of spaced apart projections (21,41) extending from the base...*". The resilient projections (21,41) of Lyle are able to flex independently of one another. It is this independent flexing of the resilient projections (21) that in use allows the fastening member (11) to engage recesses (42) of an identical fastening member (10) in a snap-fit manner. Further, wall (18) of fastening member (11) provides (female) recesses (22) that are equivalent to identical female recesses (42) in fastening member (10). Thus, the main purpose of wall (18) is to provide female recesses (22), the projections (21) being mechanically and structurally separate and distinct from wall (18).

In contrast to the invention defined by the present claims, Lyle does not teach or suggest a male protrusion portion comprising a plurality of circumferentially extending engaging

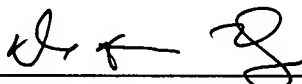
portions, each engaging portion being separated from the next engaging portion by a circumferentially extending non engaging portion and wherein the combination of engaging and non engaging portions provide a cylindrical or annular shaped wall that extends from the flange as defined in new claim 15. The present invention works in a different manner from Lyle. In the present invention, the plurality of circumferentially extending engaging portions (26) do not flex independently of one another; but rather form part of curved wall (34). In contrast, Lyle relies upon identical members (18, 38) to engage one another rather than a male to female arrangement. In Lyle, this is made possible by the provision of spaces between each of the three resilient projections (21, 41). In contrast, the present invention relies upon the area of contact between the engaging portions (26) and a female portion during insertion (in use). In particular, the area of contact can be achieved by selection a particular size (area) for the engaging portions (26) relative to the non-engaging portions (28) as defined in claim 13.

Accordingly, the present invention is structurally different from Lyle. In the present invention, this structural difference readily allows the control of the force required to disengage the male member from the female member in use. This control is provided by adjusting the ratio of the area of the engaging portions relative to the non-engaging portions, as described on page 3, lines 16-24. The present invention provides an improved fastener where the separation force can be pre-selected to suit a particular fabric; controlling the force required to separate the male and female stud is often crucial to avoiding tearing of fabric in use. Further, if a very easily disengaged fastener is desired this can also advantageously be provided by the present invention without sacrificing strength, because of the continuous curved wall 34, formed by the combination of engaging (26) and non-engaging portions (28). In contrast, to achieve the same effect using the individual projections of the stud disclosed by Lyle would require these projections to have a very small arcuate length, and result in them having low durability. Accordingly, Lyle does not teach or suggest each of the limitations of the present claims and the invention defined by the present claims is not anticipated by Lyle.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that all pending claims are in condition for allowance and request that all claims be allowed. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned should he believe that this would expedite prosecution of this application. It is believed that no fee is required. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 13-2165.

Respectfully submitted,

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